



# FISHING OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA

11 October 2019

Ms. Martha Williams  
Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Director's Office  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Ms. Williams:

On behalf of the nearly 900 outfitter and guide members and the board of directors of the Fishing Outfitters Association (FOAM), I respectfully submit the attached petition that requests the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to adopt these new rules pertaining to management of commercial use on the Madison River.

FOAM has had a seat at the table in formulating a Madison River Recreation Management Plan since well before the first inception of the Madison River Citizens Advisory Committee in 2011. FOAM also had a seat on the recently disbanded Madison River Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRC). Since then, your department has been trying to gain formal approval of a Madison River Recreation Plan. However, no plan has received widespread public support or been approved by the Commission. Following the August Commission meeting, members of the Commission asked FOAM to propose recommendations for a plan that will help manage commercial use on the Madison River.

To formulate recommendations to address commercial use on the Madison River, FOAM held 9 meetings with Madison River Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) holders, guides, and outfitters to discuss potential management options. From these meetings and others as well as countless emails and phone conversations, we compiled a plan incorporating recommendations that will help manage commercial use at current levels while maintaining an avenue of entry for new outfitters on the Madison River.

FOAM, having over 300 outfitter members and over 500 guide members statewide, represents nearly all the fishing outfitters and the many of fishing guides across Montana. FOAM also represents over 75% of all 203 Madison River SRP holders. Through a recent survey of our members, this plan has the overwhelming support from members and the majority of commercial use support for these recommendations as part of an adaptive Madison River Recreation Management Plan.

We look forward to working through this process with FWP and the Commission to develop a recreation management plan on the Madison River that can work for all stakeholders. We further realize that a final rule may revise this plan and we are comfortable with revisions as long as we and commercial users are involved in the revision process.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Bias'.

Michael A. Bias, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Cc: Commissioners Colton, Aldrich, Brower, Byorth, and Stuker.